

Completed

THE FULL PICTURE OF GOD IN
ROMANS

4

DIG DEEPER

YES, NO & MAYBE

1. My faith wavers less than the other people in this room.

2. There is nothing anyone can do to attain righteousness before God on their own.

3. Attaining righteousness by grace as a gift through faith causes me to brag.

4. Works that glorify God are always preceded by faith.

5. True faith is only empowered by experiencing God's power.



• What does it mean to you to "believe God"?

READ: Romans 4:9-25 (NLT)

9 Now, is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it also for uncircumcised Gentiles? Well, we have been saying that Abraham was counted as righteous by God because of his faith. 10 But how did this happen? Was he counted as righteous only after he was circumcised, or was it before he was circumcised? **Clearly, God accepted Abraham before he was circumcised!**

11 Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous—even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith. 12 And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those who have been circumcised, but only if they have the same kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.

13 Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. 14 **If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless.** 15 For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)

16 **So the promise is received by faith.** It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. 17 That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

18 Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" 19 And **Abraham's faith did not weaken**, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb.

20 Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. 21 **He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises.** 22 And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. 23 And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded 24 for our benefit, too, assuring us that **God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him**, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

• When someone today indicates that they're interested in becoming a member of our church, what are some of the things they are told they must do in order to become and live like one?

DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

▲ (Vss. 9,10) **When was Abraham counted as righteous?** - If Abraham was 85 years old when declared righteous, justification occurred 14 years before he was circumcised at age 99. Circumcision in the early church was a problem. Because most early converts were Jews, a question quickly arose as to whether new Gentile converts had to be circumcised. Effectively, did Gentile converts need to become Jews before becoming Christians in order to be fully "initiated" believers?

✓ (Vs. 14) **Is God's promise only for those who obey the law?** - The Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, indicates that 435 years was the period of time Israel was in Egypt and in Canaan, which would then mean that Abraham was in right relationship with God about 435 years before the 10 Commandments existed.

✗ (Vs. 14) **"The promise is pointless"** - "Is made pointless" is perfect in tense, "has been voided and as a present result is in a state of invalidation." "Made of none effect" is the perfect of katargeō (καταργεῖ), "to render inoperative." The promise in that case would be permanently inoperative.

💡 **Why do you think God would honor a "faith" that existed without a physical expression and without keeping the law?**

NOTES:

▲ (Vs. 16) **"So the promise is received by faith"** - The Greek sentence is much more dramatic than the English, since in the original there are neither verbs nor the noun 'promise'. It reads literally: 'therefore by faith in order that according to grace'. The fixed point is that God is gracious, and that salvation originates in his sheer grace alone. But in order that this may be so, our human response can only be faith. For grace gives and faith takes. Faith's exclusive function is humbly to receive what grace offers. Otherwise 'grace would no longer be grace'

✗ (Vs. 19) **"Abraham's faith did not weaken"** - "Weaken/Stagger" is diakrinō (διακρίνω), made up of krinō (κρίνω), "to judge" and dia (διά), whose root meaning is "two," thus, "to judge between two," thus, "to vacillate between two opinions or decisions." Abraham did not vacillate between belief and unbelief with respect to his difficulty and the ability of God to meet it. He did not waver.

💡 **What are our greatest challenges in having a faith in God's promised salvation that does not waver between two opinions?**

▲ (Vs. 21) **"He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises."** - God has the power (δύναμις) dunamis, the power or ability—to perform. In other words, Abraham's faith was empowered by contemplating God's power! The more Abraham looked at who he was and who God was, the more empowered—fully persuaded—he became that God was able to do that which he had promised.

💡 **What is it about the power of God that gives you Abraham-like faith?**

My Prayers This week:

1. What tempts me to have confidence in my salvation other than my faith?
2. What causes my faith to waver?
3. What new aspect of God's character do I understand better this week?